

On Tuesday of my first clinical in IM6 I was assigned to attend Dove Tree which is a ranch facility designed to help those who need help with detoxing and getting the help needed to refrain from relapsing with substances such as alcohol and drugs. At first, I thought I was there just to observe, and I wasn't sure what to expect. I was afraid to look at the clients and make them feel as though I was there to judge or give them the feeling of an audience that may be unwanted or even wanted in a negative way to act out or get attention as warned in class with certain situations and how to handle them considering body language and removing myself from situations that may arise. I followed the lady in charge at the front desk as she went to each room to wake the ladies up for their morning breakfast, vitals, medication, and group meeting to set the day for a positive outcome. I wanted to look in the rooms and see the atmosphere they lived in and how they responded but I couldn't allow myself to look in because I felt it may make them feel I was intruding on their space and watching in their vulnerable moments of peaceful sleeping and not quite ready for appearances to the world. As they each made their way into the meeting, they greeted me and made me feel very welcomed and didn't seem bothered at all that I was there. I went ahead and pulled up my chair to their meeting instead of sitting a far and as I listened to each of them discuss the step they were working on and the goals they had along with a positive affirmation that everyone chanted back to them to reinforce and encourage it. I was asked by one of the ladies if I wanted to do it too and I was nervous and didn't know what I would say about my life, so I respectfully declined. They then passed the book to the lady in charge, and she participated and shared her life which then made me think, I should give it a try. I spoke up and said I would share and as I did, they all intensively listened to me and encouraged me and made me feel welcomed with such love. To my surprise, I truly enjoyed it. After the meeting there was a little break time for them before heading to the next group meeting and in

that time, I reflected on how different the experience was going than I expected. I did not expect them to be so welcoming and open. I began to feel comfortable and ready to involve myself to show them we all are not much different. We all struggle, and we all need help to cope with life. I reflected on how interested they were in my goals and struggles and I wondered if it helped for them to see that even people dressed in scrubs who seem to have it together and going toward a positive thing in life of furthering an education and establishing a career could also struggle and deal with some of the very things they do. I thought it could be hope and a role model to not give up and to chase your dreams. Next the ranch had small groups gather in different offices where men and woman of the ranch came together, and a therapist was in the mist to guide a discussion to allow people to talk about anything from what they are happy about to what they may be upset about. I listened as each person had their moment to speak and allow feedback if they chose to and when the last gentleman spoke, he had an issue he was very upset about but as he vented about it, it was obvious that he felt guilty for feeling that way towards someone that was gong through some health problems they could not change or help themselves on. I felt a tug on my heart as he repeated himself on feeling bad for this person and wanting to help but at the same time couldn't help but feel like he had to bottle up how it was affecting him because he didn't want to hurt them or feel selfish for complaining about his own needs that weren't being met due to this situation with the other client. I wanted to help him so bad, but I sat there and waited as the other clients gave welcomed feedback and I noticed no one gave him relief to feel ok and justified to feel how he felt. They seemed to be more understanding to the other persons health needs and just wanted him to think about the other person and just try to deal with it and look at a different perspective to help change his feelings about what he couldn't change. I recognized that he felt affirmed that the guilt he felt was right and he did not seem relieved at all after

sharing it. If anything, he seemed even more defeated. I spoke up and asked if I was allowed to speak for feedback. They seemed excited to let me speak and see what I had to offer. I didn't give any advice, but I was able to recognize his big heart and quite a bit about him that I pretty much read him and told him about himself from what I could see and then told him he shouldn't feel guilty because he is there for a healing and to work on his needs, putting himself first, and learn that he is worthy. I can't remember everything I said but everything spilled out of me straight from my heart and I could feel and see the uplift in him. His response with a humble heart was, "did you read my profile"? with a laugh he said, "wow, I have never had someone be able to size me up like that, and so fast, how did you do that?" I told him we were there to observe and experience the different fields nursing has to offer and we were not given any information on anyone or access to anyone's files but that I could just recognize some things from him that I had in myself so I knew what he needed to hear to not necessarily change his situation but at least prevent him from beating himself up when he is there to learn tools to cope differently with his pattern of behavior toward his emotions. As I reflected on this event, I realized how important it was to build that therapeutic relationship with our patients and how much a difference in their day it can make when we speak and work from our hearts in a nonjudging way. I learned just how beautiful it is to see someone who is hurting have a light in their eyes, after just one small genuine gesture. I plan to remember how it felt to make someone's day turn completely around just by acknowledging and validating their feelings. I plan to make sure in my future nursing career to not lose focus on how important it is to cater not only to their medical needs but to their mental needs as well. I had an event that took place for me somewhat recently that this experience made me think of. I had a pap smear scheduled as a normal woman's checkup that I've done since I was 16 years old, and I know what to expect

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and it usually always goes the same. This last dr. I saw for my recent pap smear asked all the usual questions pertaining to my medical history and health but then she asked me out of nowhere, how my mental health was. I wasn't expecting that question at a pap smear checkup and had never had that question before at a pap smear checkup. I couldn't believe how it affected me. I paused and then started crying uncontrollably to the point of embarrassment. I didn't even know a simple question like that with no specific depth would trigger me to such a high emotion, but it did, and I cried like a baby. I was so appreciative that she even cared to go the extra mile and check on something that didn't even pertain to the visit. She listened to me for I'm sure, a little over an hour and I know that had to put her behind. She gave me advise and she recognized how hard I am on myself, and this is when I finally got help for anxiety, depression, and ADD. I am truly grateful for her, and I would probably never of talked about it or gotten help so I can't explain how much she did for me with one simple question. I am so happy to have been able to make a difference in someone else's life the way that dr. did for me.